

### ***Amendments to the Claims***

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1. (Original) A reticle barrier system for use with a lithographic reticle having a mask formed on a front surface thereof, comprising:

a mask barrier affixed to the front surface of the reticle, wherein said mask barrier surrounds the mask and has a height relative to the front surface of the reticle, and

wherein said mask barrier blocks contaminants from the mask without the use of a pellicle.

2. (Original) The reticle barrier system of claim 1, wherein a flange extends from the mask barrier at a height relative to the front surface of the reticle.
3. (Original) The reticle barrier system of claim 2, wherein said flange extends away from the mask and substantially parallel to a plane of the mask.
4. (Original) The reticle barrier system of claim 2, wherein said flange extends away from the mask and at an angle greater than ninety degrees measured

relative to a vertical position of the reticle barrier system that is substantially perpendicular to a plane of the mask.

5. (Original) The reticle barrier system of claim 1, wherein said reticle barrier system is aluminum.
6. (Original) The reticle barrier system of claim 1, wherein said reticle barrier system is ceramic.
7. (Original) The reticle barrier system of claim 1, further comprising:  
a plurality of contact barriers each having a height relative to the front surface of the reticle, wherein a contact barrier within said plurality of contact barriers is affixed to the front surface of the reticle between a contact spot on a reticle and the mask.
8. (Original) A reticle barrier system for use with a lithographic reticle having a mask formed on a front surface thereof, comprising:  
a plurality of contact barriers each having a height relative to the front surface of the reticle, wherein a contact barrier within said plurality of contact barriers is affixed to the front surface of the reticle between a contact spot on a reticle and the mask.

9. (Original) The reticle barrier system of claim 8, wherein a flange extends from the mask barrier at a height relative to the front surface of the reticle.
10. (Original) The reticle barrier system of claim 8, wherein said flange extends away from the mask in the direction of a contact spot corresponding to the contact barrier and substantially parallel to a plane of the mask.
11. (currently amended) The reticle barrier system of claim 8, wherein said flange extends away from the mask in the direction of a contact spot corresponding and at an angle greater than ninety degrees measured relative to a vertical position of the contact barrier that is substantially perpendicular to a plane of the mask.
12. (Original) The reticle barrier system of claim 8, wherein a contact barrier with said plurality of contact barriers is aluminum.
13. (Original) The reticle barrier system of claim 8, wherein a contact barrier within said plurality of contact barriers is ceramic.